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# 'He is not a spy'

## Reporter Solt wants to know how much the CIA knows (about him)

We are not Russian spies — at least, not the great majority of us.

But does the Central Intelligence Agency think we might be?

That is what we are trying to find out.

We want the CIA to tell us if the letters we mailed to Russia some 10 to 20 years ago were among the nearly 250,000 opened in the U.S. by the CIA.

A year ago a special U.S. Senate panel made the first disclosure that the CIA did open letters mailed to Russia between 1953 and 1973. From the contents of those letters, the CIA compiled an index of nearly 1.5 million names.

Am I one of those names? Possibly.

Nearly 20 years ago after a tourist visit to Russia, I did write a few letters to my tourist guide, a young Russian girl, thanking her for her help and offering to send her jazz records.

Our correspondence soon died out — as it usually does with friendships struck up in travel. The Russian guide (I remember her first name, Faina, because it is a pretty name) is probably married and settled down.

Some Americans miffed by the CIA's clandestine mail-openings have started suit against the government.

STAFF WRITER

BOB  
SOLT



distorted secret file somewhere based on Big Brother engaging in illegal super-snooping 20 years ago.

Even if a suit is started, it isn't going to do much good against those pre-Watergate literary burglars.

The U.S. Justice Department says it won't prosecute those who engaged in illegal activity.

The department maintains that while opening such mail today that is addressed to Russia and China is illegal, there isn't sufficient evidence the mail openings had been performed without presidential consent. It says that because of what Justice calls "the state of the law" between 1953 and 1973, such mail openings were not always illegal.

Illegal or not, Americans are taking advantage of the Freedom of Information Act that entitles them to know just what the CIA has in those files because of illegal mail-openings.

But getting to the truth isn't always that easy. A letter sent to